Improbable Medical Review

Improbable diagnoses, techniques, and research
compiled by Bertha Vanatian, Improbable Research staff

The Case of the Motorcycle, the Bee, and the Uvula


As W.J., a man, aged 26, while riding a motorcycle, turned his head to expectorate, an insect flew into his mouth and on the impact stung. After several attempts the insect was dislodged. It proved to be an ordinary honey bee. Violent gagging and vomiting followed before he was able to reach a physician.

Back Pain in Ouchy


Anorakophobia

“The Dangers of Wearing an Anorak,” C.M. Cheung, O.M. Durrani, M.S. Lim, M. Ramchandani, S. Banerjee, and P.I. Murray, Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine, vol. 95, no. 4, April 2002, pp. 192–3. (Thanks to Jonathan Pitts for bringing this to our attention.) The authors, who are at the Birmingham and Midland Eye Center, U.K., explain that:

Campaigns to reduce road traffic accidents have paid little attention to the way headgear could interfere with vision. Binocular visual field measurement was undertaken in six healthy volunteers wearing four different types of anorak. All four anoraks greatly reduced the horizontal and superior field of vision. The anorak producing the worst reduction resulted in a width of vision of 99 degrees and only 15 degrees of vision above eye level, versus 167 degrees and 52 degrees respectively without an anorak. Anorak wearers should turn their heads to look sideways before crossing the road.

We welcome your suggestions for this and other columns. Please enclose the full citation (no abbreviations!) and, if possible, a copy of the paper.